

Theatrical productions – clear the stage!

Sometimes the past seems to provide the perfect material for a play. On stage history comes alive and becomes reachable, vivid. In a good production, you should relate your researched knowledge about the past to your own experiences, because only then can you project yourselves into that period of time and adopt the roles. That represents the particular attraction of theatre work, but is also extremely difficult. That is why you should work together with a leader: for example, an acting or literature teacher, a theatre pedagogue or an actor or acting student.

Possible presentation forms are, e.g.:

- Straight theatre
- Pantomime/movement theatre/dance
- Masque
- Marionette theatre/puppet theatre

**Presentation
forms**

Worth considering

- What are the strengths of each different type?
- What are your strengths, where could you bring your abilities to bear?
- Who should be your audience?
- Where should you rehearse and present your play? You could present it on a stage but also before your own class, with your classmates as audience.
- Take into consideration that theatre does not begin with five-act dramas. A realization in sketches or in segments of scenes, in which different scenes highlight different historical elements, can be exciting both for you and for your audience. The raw material for creating a scene could be diaries, biographies, correspondence, political speeches or eyewitness interviews; materials that provide insights into all kinds of feelings, problems or predicaments are especially applicable.

**Worth
considering**



From the source to the scene:

- Research your theme as broadly as possible and collect information about the context of the time.
- Try to imagine the feelings of the characters and to relate the historical events to your own life.
- Develop key scenes and compile descriptions of the roles of the characters. If, for example, you wish to dramatically translate a speech, consider: Who was the speaker, when and where did he give his speech? What intentions did he have in giving the speech? How might he have appeared, how might he have behaved? Consider the public as well: Who made up his audience? Where did they come from before they assembled to hear his speech? Where will they go when the speech is over? With what kind of feelings do different target groups react to what is said? See how you can make these feelings of the audience noticeable. Consider whether your own audience can learn something about the social or biographical background of the original audience (clothing, style of speech, props, indications about the text from heckling, etc.).
- When working on the scenes, you must always take into consideration how many “hard” historical facts and how much interpretation you want to put into your play. A tip: Inform your viewers about the historical background of your piece (e.g., in the program; before, during or also after the presentation), describe its origin, replicate in the program the key source for your production – for example, a letter.
- And finally: Do not forget to document the presentation, for example, with a video camera.

**Working out
the plan**